

Uncle Sam discounts gold coins

By Roger Boye

Uncle Sam is receiving thousands of mail orders for gold and silver coins marking the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, the nation's fourth commemorative coin program since 1982.

Officials are giving special "pre-issue discounts" of from \$4 to \$25 per proof coin on orders postmarked on or before July 31.

"People who buy during the pre-issue period will pay less but they will have to wait up to six months for their coins," said Michael J. Brown, spokesman for the United States Mint.

Beginning in late summer, financial institutions and other companies will sell Constitution coins over the counter.

Collectors who buy from them will get immediate delivery but will pay a higher price.

For example, each gold coin in proof (the best finish available) costs \$200 by mail during the pre-issue period and \$225 if purchased from retailers later in the year.

The proof silver dollar sells for \$24 pre-issue and \$28 later; a two-coin proof set costs \$220 pre-issue and \$250 later.

Federal law signed by President Reagan last October authorizes the U.S. Treasury to mint up to one million \$5 coins containing .24 ounce of gold and up to 10 million dollars containing .77 ounce of silver.

Part of the profits from coin sales will be used to reduce the national debt.

Collectors who want to buy coins by mail but don't have an official order form should send a check to the United States Mint, 10001 Aerospace Drive, Lanham, Md. 20706.

They should enclose a note listing their name, address and the coins desired. (The mint has mailed order forms to people on its computerized list.)

Treasury Secretary James A. Baker and other Reagan administration dignitaries are expected to strike the first Constitution coins next Wednesday.

The gold coin depicts an eagle holding a quill pen and the silver coin shows a quill pen superimposed over a copy of the Constitution.